

This November, I was pleased to sign into law the Centennial of Flight Commemoration Act, which establishes a commission to coordinate the celebration in 2003 of the 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers' first flight. The commission's activities will raise public awareness of the enormous contributions of the Wright brothers to human progress; remind the world of the triumph of American ingenuity, inventiveness, and diligence in developing new technologies; and inspire all Americans to recognize that the daring, creativity, and spirit of adventure reflected in the achievement of the Wright brothers will be crucial to the success of our Nation in the 21st century.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved December 17, 1963 (77 Stat. 402; 36 U.S.C. 169), has designated December 17 of each year as "Wright Brothers Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation inviting the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 17, 1998, as Wright Brothers Day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 21, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 22.

Executive Order 13109—Half-Day Closing of Executive Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government on Thursday, December 24, 1998
December 17, 1998

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the

United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. All executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall be closed and their employees excused from duty for the last half of the scheduled workday on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1998, except as provided in section 2 below.

Sec. 2. The heads of executive departments and agencies may determine that certain offices and installations of their organizations, or parts thereof, must remain open and that certain employees must remain on duty for the full scheduled workday on December 24, 1998, for reasons of national security or defense or for other essential public reasons.

Sec. 3. Thursday, December 24, 1998, shall be considered as falling within the scope of Executive Order 11582 and of 5 U.S.C. 5546 and 6103(b) and other similar statutes insofar as they relate to the pay and leave of employees of the United States.

Sec. 4. This order shall apply to executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government only and is not intended to direct or otherwise implicate departments or agencies of State or local governments.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
December 17, 1998.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 21, 1998]

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Remarks Honoring Eunice Kennedy Shriver at the Special Olympics Dinner
December 17, 1998

Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you. Pretty rowdy crowd tonight. [Laughter] I am delighted to join Hillary in welcoming all of you here. We're delighted to have you at this remarkable celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Special Olympics.

Let me say just for a moment, I am also thinking tonight about the brave American men and women in uniform who are carrying out our mission in Iraq with our British allies.